

Race and Hispanic Origin, 1999

In addition to the numerous official uses for information on race and Hispanic origin, many people are interested in learning about the demographic characteristics of their own population group.

A school system might use information on race and Hispanic origin to design cultural activities that reflect

diversity in the community. A business could use it to select the mix of merchandise it will sell in a new store. All levels of government need information on race and Hispanic origin to implement and evaluate programs, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, Public Health Act, Healthcare Improvement Act, Job Partnership Training Act, Equal Credit Opportunity Act, Fair Housing Act, and others.

Words That Count

- **Racial and Hispanic origin classifications** used in this report adhere to Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Federal Statistical Policy Directive No. 15: "Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Agencies and Administrative Reporting," Federal Register 43:1929-19270, May 4, 1978. New standards were adopted by OMB in October 1997 and will be implemented by all federal agencies no later than January 1, 2003. OMB sets the standards for federal statistics and administrative reporting on race and ethnicity.
- **Race** is based on self-identification by the respondents (the householder or someone who may be reporting race in his or her absence) in the Current Population Survey. The population is divided into four groups including: White, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Asian and Pacific Islander.
- **Hispanic origin** is based on self-identification by respondents (the householder or someone who may be reporting Hispanic origin in his or her absence) in the Current Population Survey through a question that asks for an individual's

origin or descent. People of Hispanic origin are those who indicated that their origin was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or some other Hispanic origin. People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

- **Non-Hispanic** is a term used to indicate that Hispanics are not included in a racial category. Because Hispanics may be of any race, the racial categories of White, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Asian and Pacific Islander all contain some people of Hispanic origin. In this chapter and throughout most of this report, the term **White non-Hispanic** is used to indicate the White population minus that part of this group that is of Hispanic origin.
- **The civilian labor force** consists of all noninstitutionalized civilians aged 16 and older who are either working or looking for work. The data in this report are for March 1999 and are not adjusted for seasonal changes. Therefore, they may not agree with data released by the Department of Labor.

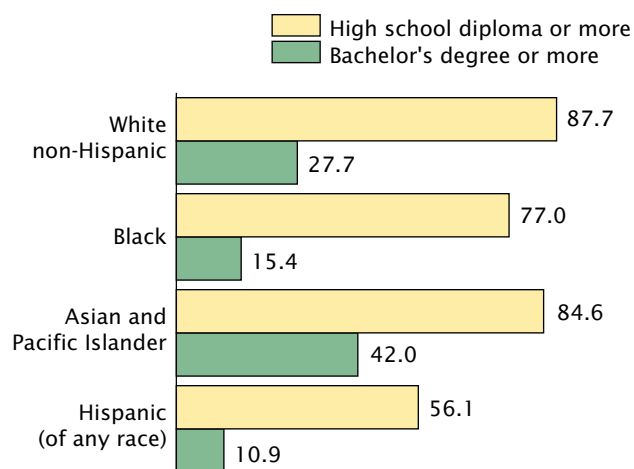
A question on race has been asked in U.S. censuses since 1790, but information on Hispanic origin has been collected only since 1970. A new racial standard that permits respondents to select one or more racial categories was approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1997 and introduced in Census 2000. However, the Current Population Survey will not collect data on one or more races until 2003. This section presents data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) and provides valuable information on White non-Hispanics, Blacks, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics.¹

While these broad race and ethnic categories provide an overview of each population, they also mask many differences within each group. Every group contains new immigrants, urban and rural populations, and people from different cultures. The Asian and Pacific Islander population is made up of many different groups of people, including Asian Indians, Filipinos, Koreans, Native Hawaiians, and Samoans. Many of the people in some groups, such as the Chinese and Japanese, have been in the United States for generations. Other groups, such as the Hmong, Vietnamese,

¹ Although the Census Bureau produces intercensal estimates on the American Indian and Alaska Native population, the sample size of the Current Population Survey is too small to produce reliable characteristics for this group.

Figure 16-1.
High School and College Graduates by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1999

(Percent of the population aged 25 and older)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Laotians, and Cambodians are comparatively recent arrivals to this country. People of Hispanic origin are members of an ethnic group and may be of any race. Even though Hispanics share linguistic similarities, they include Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, South and Central Americans, and others with markedly different characteristics.

Educational attainment varies among the racial and ethnic groups.²

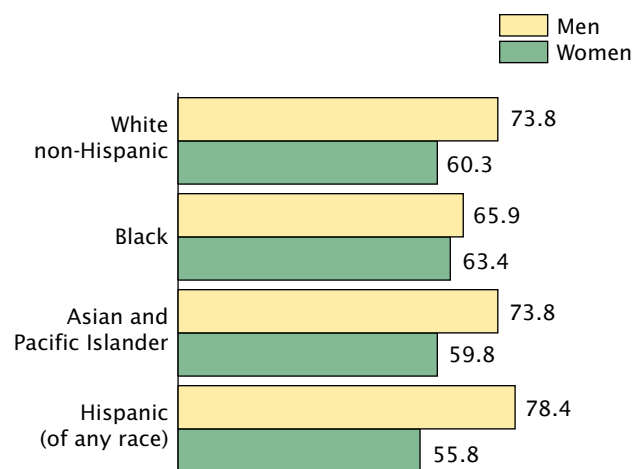
Among the population 25 years old and older, 85 percent of Asian and Pacific Islanders had completed high school, compared with 88 percent of White non-Hispanics. However, 42 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders in this age group held at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 28 percent of White non-Hispanics.

The proportion of the Black population aged 25 and older with a high school diploma, 77 percent, was 11 percentage points lower than the proportion among White non-Hispanics — a significant improvement over 1989 when the difference was 16 percentage points. In 1999, 15 percent of Blacks held a bachelor's degree or more.

² See Chapter 9 for more information educational attainment.

Figure 16-2.
Civilian Labor Force Participation Rates by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1999

(Percent of population aged 16 and older)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.

In 1999, 56 percent of Hispanics had a high school diploma or better and 11 percent held at least a bachelor's degree. The share of Hispanics holding a high school diploma increased 5 percentage points since 1989, while the share holding a bachelor's degree or better was not significantly different from 10 years earlier.

In 1999, labor force participation rates differed among the racial and ethnic groups and between men and women.

In March 1999, the share of men (74 percent) and women (60 percent) aged 16 and older who were working or looking for work was about the same for both White non-Hispanics and Asian and Pacific Islanders. Sixty-six percent of Black men and 63 percent of Black women were labor force participants, as were 78 percent of Hispanic men and 56 percent of Hispanic women.

White non-Hispanics had the lowest unemployment rates in March 1999 — 4 percent for men and 3 percent for women. However, these rates were not statistically different from the rates for Asians and Pacific Islanders. The unemployment rate was about 4 percent for both men and women in the Asian and Pacific Islander community. The unemployment rates were significantly higher in Hispanic and Black communities. Among Hispanic labor force participants, 6 percent of men and 8 percent of women were looking for work. And the unemployment rate was 9 percent for both Black men and women.³

Poverty is a fact of life for every racial and ethnic group.⁴

While 8 percent of White non-Hispanics were poor in 1998, 13 percent of Asians and Pacific Islanders and 26 percent of both Blacks and Hispanics were. White non-Hispanics saw a slight decline from the previous year, but the share of Asians and Pacific Islanders in poverty was statistically unchanged from the year

³ There is no statistical difference between the unemployment rates for Black men and women and the unemployment rate for Hispanic women.

⁴ The 1999 Current Population Survey collects poverty statistics for 1998. See Chapter 13 for more information on the 1999 poverty rates for racial and ethnic groups.

before. Even though the 1998 poverty rate for Blacks was statistically unchanged from the previous year, it was still the lowest rate since 1959 — the first year the data were collected. The share of Hispanics who lived in poverty declined significantly from 27 percent in 1997.

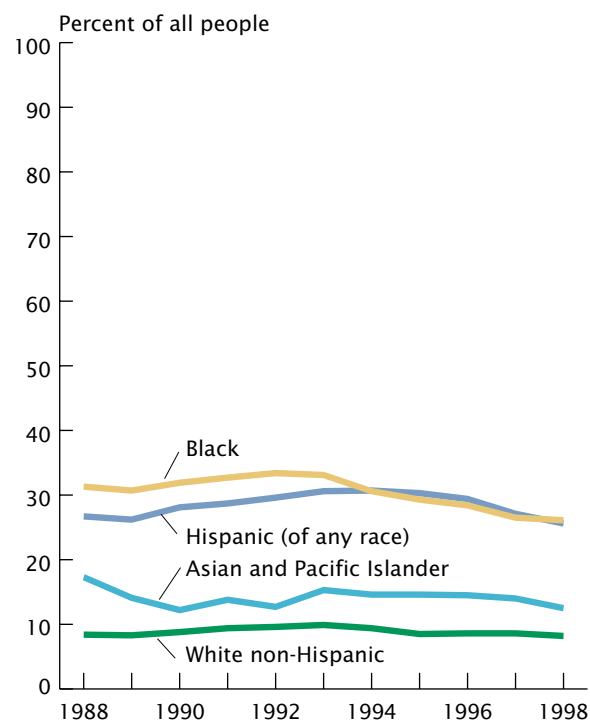
Child poverty rates were higher than the total poverty rate in each group: 11 percent for White non-Hispanics, 18 percent for Asians and Pacific Islanders, 34 percent for Hispanics, and 37 percent for Blacks.⁵ In 1998, Asian and Pacific Islander families were about twice as likely as White non-Hispanic families to live in poverty (11 percent and 6 percent, respectively). But the share of families in poverty was about 23 percent for both Black and Hispanic families.⁶

⁵ The child poverty rates for Blacks and Hispanics are not statistically different.

⁶ The percent of Black and Hispanic families in poverty was not statistically different.

Figure 16-3.

Poverty Rates for Individuals by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1988-98



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Surveys, March 1989 to 1999.

Generally speaking, married couples have higher incomes than other types of families.⁷ About 82 percent of White non-Hispanic families and 80 percent of Asian families were maintained by married couples.⁸ Married couples represented 68 percent of Hispanic families and fewer than half of all Black families.

On the other hand, families maintained by women with no husband present are among the poorest. About 13 percent of both White non-Hispanic and Asian and Pacific Islander families were this type, as were 45 percent of Black families and 24 percent of Hispanic families.

The racial and ethnic composition of the United States is changing.

To find out more about how many people are in each group, which groups are growing fastest, and how they are distributed throughout the United States, see Chapter 2. Many chapters in this report contain information by race and ethnicity. The most detailed information can be found in the specific reports listed below.

⁷ See Chapter 12 for more information on income.

⁸ The percentage of White non-Hispanic families and the percentage of Asian and Pacific Islander families that are married-couple families are not statistically different.

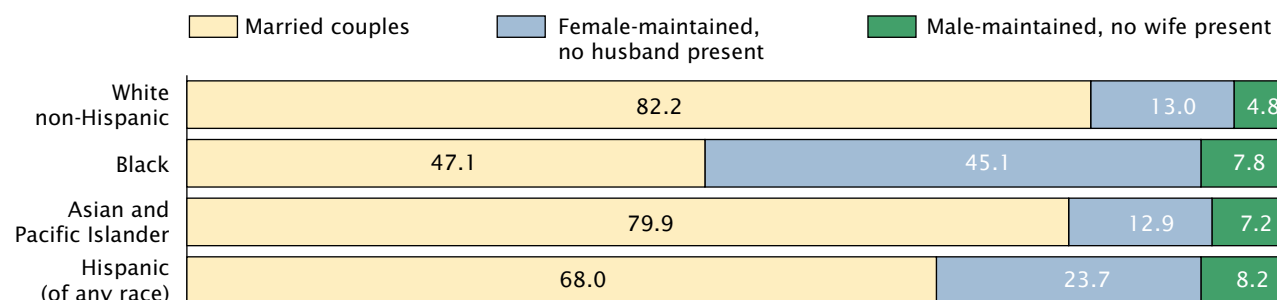
The Census Bureau Can Tell You More

- For more detailed information, consult the following U. S. Census Bureau Current Population Reports: *The Asian and Pacific Islander Population in the United States: March 1999* by Karen Humes and Jesse McKinnon; *The Black Population in the United States: March 1999* by Jesse McKinnon and Karen Humes; and *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 1999* by Roberto R. Ramirez.
- Look for complete reports and detailed tables on the Census Bureau's World Wide Web site www.census.gov. Click on "H" for "Hispanic" and "R" for "Race."
- Contact the Ethnic and Hispanic Statistics Branch of the U.S. Census Bureau at 301-457-2403 or the Racial Statistics Branch at 301-457-2402 or e-mail pop@census.gov.
- For information on publications and other resources, see Appendix A.

Figure 16-4.

Family Type by Race and Hispanic Origin of Householder: 1999

(Percent distribution)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.